

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Claims 26-40 are pending in the present application. In light of the following remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all presently pending claims are in condition for allowance.

II. THE 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) REJECTIONS SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN

Claims 26-29, 31, 32, and 36-39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Schwaighofer (U.S. Published App. No. 2002/0053750) in view of Durez (European Publication No. EP 0786380).

Claim 26 recites, “[a] method for manufacturing a surface decor for a trim part, the surface decor comprising a first region formed exclusively by a decor inlay and a second region formed by a cast skin, comprising: introducing the decor inlay into a space between upper and lower tools of a casting tool; clamping an edging of the decor inlay between the upper and lower tools so that the edging projects into a cavity formed between the upper and lower tools and corresponding to the second region of the surface decor, a remaining portion of the decor inlay being accommodated outside of said cavity, the cavity being sealed at a location where the decor inlay is clamped between the upper and lower tools; and filling the cavity between the upper and lower tools with a curing material to form the cast skin enclosing the edging after the decor inlay has been clamped between the upper and lower tools, *wherein the edging is enclosed by the curing material.*”

Schwaighofer discloses a substrate (14) with a first area (18) on which a soft trim component (36) is molded. (*See* Schwaighofer, ¶ [0018]). The first area (18) is placed between two mold halves (30, 32) and foam (46) passes through a sprue (38) in the second mold half (32) and an aperture (24) in the substrate onto the first area. (*Id.* at ¶ [0023], Fig. 2). However, Applicant respectfully submits that Schwaighofer’s substrate

(14) is not a decor inlay. In fact, one of ordinary skill in the art would understand that a substrate is used to mold (or mount) decorative surfaces, like the soft trim component (36) of Schwaighofer. This is further evidenced by the recess or groove (22) of Schwaighofer. (*Id.* at Figs. 1, 3). Such a recess is where two surfaces would meet. Although Schwaighofer only discloses how one surface (36) is formed, it is clear from Figure 3 of Schwaighofer that another surface should be formed on the remaining portion of the substrate (14) which does not have the soft trim component (36) molded thereon. Accordingly, Schwaighofer fails to disclose or suggest “a first region formed exclusively by a decor inlay and a second region formed by a cast skin.”

Even if Schwaighofer did disclose a decor inlay, which Applicant does not concede, the Examiner correctly acknowledges that Schwaighofer fails to disclose or suggest “the edging is enclosed by the curing material.” (*See* 7/7/10 Office Action, p. 3). To cure this deficiency, the Examiner refers to Duriez. Initially, Applicant would like to point out that the Examiner fails to point to which aspect, if any, meets the recitation of “the edging is enclosed by the curing material” in claim 1. In any case, Duriez also fails to disclose or suggest “a first region formed exclusively by a decor inlay and a second region formed by a cast skin.” Duriez discloses an insert (3) with a skin (4) disposed on its top surface. (*See* Duriez Fig. 3). The insert and skin combination is inserted into a molding die with two halves (9, 10). Subsequently, a mold material (1) is injected through an aperture (15). (*Id.* At Fig. 4). As seen in Figure 1 of Duriez, this mold material (1) is disposed beneath and outside the boundaries of the insert and skin combination (3, 4). Since the insert and skin combination is what is inserted into the molding die in Duriez, then the Examiner must be referring to this combination to meet the claimed decor inlay. However, as previously stated, the mold material (1) is also present beneath the insert and skin combination (3, 4), then Duriez cannot possibly disclose or suggest “a first region formed *exclusively* by a decor inlay and a second region formed by a cast skin.”

Furthermore, Applicant respectfully submits that one of ordinary skill in the art would not combine the teachings of Schwaighofer and Duriez because in order to enclose

the edge of the first area (18) if the substrate (14) with foam in Schwaighofer, the first and second molding halves (30, 32) must be unclamped so that foam can enter the area between the second molding half (32) and the substrate (14). However, if the foam (46) were allowed to enter an area behind the first area (18) of the substrate (14), then the foam (46) would escape the molding die onto the portion of the substrate (14) which is not inside the mold. None of the cited referenced suggest that the molding halves comprise webs which can hold the edge of the substrate (14) so that the mold is sealed off from the outside.

Applicant respectfully submits that Schwaighofer and Duriez, together or alone, fail to disclose or suggest “a first region formed exclusively by a decor inlay and a second region formed by a cast skin” and “the edging is enclosed by the curing material,” as recited in claim 26 and that claim 26 is, therefore, allowable. Because claims 26-29, 31, 32, and 36-39 depend on and, therefore, contain all of the limitations of claim 26, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also allowable.

Claim 34 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Schwaighofer and Duriez in view of Ota et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,811,053). Claims 30, 33, 35, and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Schwaighofer and Duriez in view of Spengler (U.S. Patent No. 6,214,157).

Applicant respectfully submits that neither Ota nor Spengler cure the above mentioned deficiencies of Schwaighofer and Duriez and that Schwaighofer, Duriez, Ota, and Spengler, taken alone or in any combination, fail to disclose or suggest “a first region formed exclusively by a decor inlay and a second region formed by a cast skin” and “the edging is enclosed by the curing material,” as recited in claim 26. Because claims 30, 33, 34, 35, and 40 depend on and, therefore, contain all of the limitations of claim 26, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also allowable.

CONCLUSION

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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